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Jermaine Edwards: Fully Dependent on Jesus

The first thing that drew me to this song was its nice reggae beat; the smooth rhythm drew me in, forcing me to rock to it and it soon became one of my favorites. *In my Life* by Jermaine Edwards is a song that gives perspective that people need to have Jesus in their life daily. It is a conscious song; the artist's voice was clear and distinctive as if he were teaching or proclaiming a message: we all need Jesus. In the Caribbean, this genre of music is frowned upon by some in the religious community because many were brought up singing only traditional hymns. Nonetheless, reggae music is a large part of our Caribbean culture. "Let no one miss the message because they are distracted by how it is presented," wrote Edwards. Jermaine Edwards says that we need Jesus in our lives because nothing can equate to a relationship with Jesus.

Different types of music can have psychological impacts on people which can affect their mood, ease stress, and help them to focus. I usually listen to this song when I am by myself or driving to work and the lyrics have encouraged me tremendously. They capture my attention and remind me how often I need to communicate with God. In this paper I will be analyzing the lyrics of Jermaine Edwards' song.

Edwards begins by stating “Lord I’m nothing before you,” immediately it is clear that his lyrics are biblically based. He continues, “Jesus I put everything aside because I acknowledge you are the most high. Even the scholars can’t deny you are the most high, your words can’t ever be a lie.” What’s interesting is that Edwards is using his lyrics to help teach his audiences because many of his lyrics are found in different verses throughout the bible. When Edwards says “your words can’t ever be a lie”, his lyrics go hand in hand with Romans 3:4 which says, “Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true.” God is our creator and sustainer if we don’t have Him we are lost but if we acknowledge Him in all of our ways, He will direct our path (Proverbs 3:5). Jermaine continues in the song, “If I own everything in this world and don’t have your presence, it makes no sense. If I have the highest education that man could reach, I still will be dumb if I don’t have you in my life.” Edwards emphasizes that to have all the material possessions in life such as houses, cars, fame, and money without God will all be in vain. As human beings we search for the true meaning of life and to find out if it makes sense, but until we go back to our original source, God, we will never understand our purpose. Jermaine realized this which is why he sang that he needed a more intimate relationship with God.

Being the second child of a bishop and pastor, Jermaine Edwards grew up in the church where he heard sermons regularly on what true life is. Edwards admits that as a pastor’s kid in his early years, christian allegiance was more compliance than a conviction. He was a worship leader, a keyboard player, and held other positions in the church. However, in the process of time, he hungered for intimacy and a deeper

relationship with God. Eventually, Jermaine realized that God was calling him into a new ministry as a gospel artist. As he wrote *In my Life*, Jermaine took inspiration from the great King Solomon who “undertook projects: built houses; planted vineyards, gardens, and parks; herded flocks; and amassed gold and silver. He denied himself nothing his heart desired and when he looked at himself he concluded that it was all meaningless” (Ecclesiastes 2:4). Solomon took great wisdom and pride in amassing his wealth, but when he considered that the person who would come after him may not be as wise, he admits that it is all meaningless. Jermaine said that a couple of people encouraged him to go into secular music because they believed that he would be more successful. His response to this echoes what was written in Philippians 1: 21, “To live is Christ but to die is gain.” Jermaine writes, “How could I give up God for fame? Saying you are having fun but you call me lame, but I rather enter through the heavens gate.” He emphasizes that he prefers to use his talent for God's glory. If he continues to live for God, God will be glorified by the life he lives, or if he dies he will be at home in heaven. Jermaine continues, “Some people in this world act as if they own life, living for themselves they don't want to know Christ, but when the pain starts to fall, God's name they start to call. Never knew they needed God until fame starts to call.” Jermaine highlights a very interesting situation of life - when people are in a crisis or at a crossroad in life that they reach out for God. The reality is God is always there waiting and is able to help; He wants a relationship with us

In the second stanza of the song, Edwards elaborated on the fact that it was Jesus who reached out for him and gave him redemption. He says, “See my fleshly

weakness, cleanse me and give me righteousness, I know I can't repay but I can live my life with reverence." He states he has great respect and admiration for God and he wants to live in His presence. He also realizes it was only Christ who could have redeemed his "fleshly weakness" in order to give him His righteousness. Edwards articulates the driving need behind Christianity - humans could not save themselves, so God implemented a plan where He sent his son, Jesus Christ, to redeem all of humanity. Although he doesn't use the exact word "redemption", redemption does play an important role in the lyrics that he writes. To redeem is to buy something back and, as Jermaine put it, his "fleshly weakness" kept him from God. The bible says that it is sin that separates us from God in Isaiah 59 and that it is only the Holy Spirit who can give birth to spiritual life in John 3. It is not a coincidence that so much of Jermaine's lyrics mirror scriptures written in the bible. In an interview, Jermaine said, "One of my deepest desires is to line up with God's kingdom and know I have done my best." He is intentional about his music and lyrics both; he speaks biblically because he wants to impact the lives of people for the kingdom of God. Edwards ends the quote stating that he can live his life "in reverence". In order to understand what he means by this, we must understand what reverence is. According to an article, "Reverence brings us closer to other people and to the world around us. The reverent person notices and responds to the mystery of life and the sacredness of all things. Reverence is an attitude of dependence and humility, an appreciation of the splendor and beauty of all reality, and a longing for something greater." For Edwards to live his life in reverence, it would mean living in a constant state of wonder, gratitude, and awe for all that God has done for him.

Jermaine is not only a singer/songwriter, but a composer, producer, and performer. He has performed throughout the United States of America, England, Bahamas, and the Caribbean. After analyzing his lyrics, it is clear that what he sings is on point with what is in the bible. Because he is intentional about what he produces, he holds himself to a high standard. He also believes in holding his peers to the same standard because he says, "Jamaican gospel artists need to hold themselves to higher standards when it relates to the quality of the material that they release. Music has a powerful influence on people for good or bad, artists should be conscious of their responsibility to the public." This is a very noble thing to aspire to; based on what he has produced thus far on his most recent album, he is living up to the standard that he has set for himself and his peers. He creates beautiful songs with a smooth reggae beat to dance to and a powerful word to share.

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